

September 14, 1999

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Comments on the Cal-Fed Bay-Delta Program
Visalia Hearing

I would like to express my concern about the paltry amount of monies budgeted for more water storage. The estimated budget for the next 7 years is \$5.1 billion. Only 7% or \$370 million has been ear marked to study additional water storage.

This program has been a work in process since 1995 and to propose at this point, seven more years to study storage issues and tying storage to "demonstrated progress in water use efficiency", is not addressing the most pressing needs of the state which are reliable water deliveries and most importantly, more water.

The population growth of California is expected to increase by 20 million people in the next quarter century. We now have a mismatch between current water supplies, the needs of water users and the "ecosystem needs" of the Bay-Delta system.

The Water Management Strategy lists as one of its goals "Improve access to existing or new water supplies..." I would like to present some information that has been ignored in the Cal-Fed process. 50% of California's runoff originates from national forest lands. The west side of the Sierra Nevada range produces over 19.6 million acre feet of water per year. Vegetative management can increase water runoff by as much as 20% and delay its release for several weeks. Active management of the Sierra Nevada National Forests could yield as much as 3.9 million more acre feet of water per year. Conservative estimates indicate that just decreasing the vegetative build up in the National Forests due to 100 years of fire suppression would increase water yield by 10% or 1.9 million acre feet.

The Cal-Fed process needs to look at all the up stream watersheds that feed the Delta and determine what steps can be taken to increase the water yield. The Organic Act of 1897 which established national forests, states "No national forest shall be established except...for the purpose of securing favorable conditions of water flows". The State of California needs to exercise its rights and demand from its federal co-agency, the US Forest Service, an evaluation of the potential increase in water flows from the Sierra Nevada range through an active vegetative management program.

Respectfully Submitted

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